

ANNEXURE B

BUDGET SPEECH

Back to Basics for Service Delivery
and Inclusive Growth



Annexure E7

INDIGENT SUPPORT POLICY

2022-2023



City of
Ekurhuleni

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INDIGENT SUPPORT POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

The Indigent Support Policy is a legal imperative, a tool designed to ensure that persons and households classified as indigent have access to basic services as defined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act No 108 of 1996. The policy is a result of continuous prevalence of indigence and poverty within communities. This policy therefore is a tool of intervention to alleviate the plight and to encourage indigent households to live within affordable consumption levels. The Indigent Support Policy is aimed at ensuring that the State fulfil its constitutional obligation contained in the Bill of Rights. This policy must be read in conjunction with the Credit Control Policy and applicable legislative frameworks.

2. PREAMBLE

WHEREAS Section 74 of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 2000 (Act No 32 of 2000), requires that the Council should, in formulating a Tariff Policy for the municipality, at least take into consideration the extent of subsidisation of tariffs for poor households.

WHEREAS Council needs to have an approved Indigent Support Policy.

WHEREAS such policy must provide procedures and guidelines for the subsidisation of basic services and tariff charges to its indigent households.

WHEREAS the Council has committed itself to render a basic level of services necessary to ensure an acceptable and reasonable quality of life which takes into account health and environmental considerations.

NOW THEREFORE the Council of the City of Ekurhuleni has adopted the **Indigent Support Policy** set out hereunder: -

3. PURPOSE

- ▶ To ensure and maintain access to basic services and/or benefits for all identified and deserving poor households including emergency services rendered by the City of Ekurhuleni.
- ▶ To improve monitoring systems, provide support and to strengthen capacity of the City of Ekurhuleni to implement the policy.
- ▶ To ensure that subsidisation for indigent support is funded and allocated as per policy directives to the qualifying households.
- ▶ To effectively manage co-ordination between internal and external departments with regard to the policy implementation.
- ▶ To link the members of the registered indigent households with the exit programs with the exclusion of the pensioners and child headed households.
- ▶ To ensure that the City of Ekurhuleni remains financially sustainable while meeting the needs of the indigents.
- ▶ To ascertain appropriate targeting options for the defined indigent households so as to ensure inclusiveness in the approach and application of the policy in an equitable manner.

4. OBJECTIVE OF POLICY

The objective of the Indigent Support Policy is to ensure:-

- (a) the provision of basic services to indigent households in communities falling under the jurisdiction of the City of Ekurhuleni in a sustainable manner, within the financial and administrative capacity of the City of Ekurhuleni.
- (b) the establishment of procedures and guidelines for the effective of subsidisation of basic service charges to such approved indigent households, within budgetary and Intergovernmental grant guidelines.

5. PRINCIPLES OF THE POLICY

Section 74 (2) (c) of the Municipal Systems Act, Act 32 of 2000 stipulates inter alia the following:-

“poor households must have access to at least basic services through:

- (i) tariffs that cover only operating and maintenance costs;*
- (ii) special tariffs or life line tariffs for low levels of use or consumption of services for basic levels of service; or*
- (iii) any other direct or indirect method of subsidisation of tariffs for poor households;”*

The following are the guiding principles for the formulation of an Indigent Support Policy:

- (a) the Indigent Support Policy must be formulated in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, (Act No 108 of 1996 and other applicable legislation, amongst others, the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act, 2000 (Act No. 3 of 2000) which provides that everybody has a right to administrative justice that is lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair.
- (b) relief must be provided by the City of Ekurhuleni to registered residential consumers of services who are indigent.
- (c) Council must, wherever possible, ensure that any relief is in accordance with the Constitution and is cost effective, sustainable, practical, fair, equitable and justifiable.
- (d) the subsidising of minimum service levels should not result in the creation of a massive bureaucratic administration that would not be cost effective to implement.
- (e) differentiation must be made between those households who cannot afford to pay for basic services and those who do not want to pay for these services.
- (f) other municipal services in addition to free basic services should, where possible, be affordable and beneficial to the indigents.
- (g) the relief should be valid for a maximum period of 36 months.
- (h) the Council may review and amend the qualification criteria for indigent support.
- (i) the joint gross income of all the household occupants will be taken into account in determining the validity of indigent support application.
- (k) the indigent data-base shall be updated regularly.
- (l) misuse of any support or grant or supply of invalid information will lead to punitive action by City of Ekurhuleni against indigent support beneficiaries.

- (m) the City of Ekurhuleni reserve the right to verify new applications and existing approved indigents against any relevant external data source.
- (n) the Council may use external services and/or references to verify the information provided by the applicants.
- (o) Linking this policy with Poverty Alleviation, Economic Development initiatives, Gauteng Department of Social Development, etc.

6. DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this policy, any word or expression to which a meaning has been assigned in the Act, shall bear the same meaning in this policy, and unless the context indicates otherwise:–

- “Authorised Officer”** : means any official of the Council who has been authorised by the Council to administer, implement and enforce the provisions of this policy.
- “By-law”** : means a by-law adopted by the Council.
- “Basic Services”** : means the supply of the following basic services within the budgetary and legislative guidelines:
- ▶ Energy supply
 - ▶ Water supply
 - ▶ Sanitation services
 - ▶ Refuse removal service
- “Calendar days”** : means all days in the month inclusive of Saturdays and Sundays.
- “Child Headed Households”** : Is deemed to be a household that is headed by a minor dependant or child under the age of 18 years who has assumed the role of care-giver in respect of the children in the household and is also responsible for management of such households, due to the parent/s guardian or care-giver of the household who was the registered owner/ account holder/ legal tenant of the property who is terminally ill, deceased or abandoned the children in that household.
- “City Manager”** : means the person appointed by the Council as the City Manager of the City of Ekurhuleni in terms of section 82 of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act 117 of 1998), and includes any person:
- (a) acting in such position, and
 - (b) to whom the City Manager has delegated a power, function or duty.
- “Council”** : Means -
- (a) the “Municipality” and vice versa;
 - (b) the Council of the City of Ekurhuleni established by Provincial Notice No. 6768, as amended,

exercising its legislative and executive authority through the municipality;

- (c) its successor in title;
- (d) a structure or person exercising a delegated power or carrying out an instruction, where any power in these by-laws has been delegated or sub-delegated, or an instruction given, as contemplated in section 59 of the Local Government Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No 32 of 2000); or
- (e) a service provider fulfilling a responsibility under these by-laws, assigned to it in terms of section 81(2) of the Act, or any other by-law, as the case may be.

“Deemed Indigent Household” : means individuals who live together in a single residential property and qualifies for indigent relief based on the use and value of property as determined in terms of general valuation roll.

“Dependant” : To read as follows: means a minor and or a person who is financially dependent and resides permanently with the owner and/or tenant of property in a single residential property within the area of jurisdiction of City of Ekurhuleni.

“Essential household services package” : means provision of water supply, sanitation, refuse removal, supply of basic energy.

“Household Income” : means any form of remuneration and/ or income as defined in the Sixth Schedule to the Income Tax Act, 58 of 1962 but excluding State Children Support grants.

“illegal connection” : a connection to any system through which municipal services are provided, which is not authorised or approved by the Municipality or its authorised agent.

“Indigent Household” : means individuals who live together in a single residential property and collectively qualifies for indigent relief in terms of this policy.

“Indigent Person” : means a poor needy person lacking the basic necessities of life such as insufficient water, basic sanitation, refuse removal, health care, housing, environmental health, supply of basic energy, food, clothing and has a lower income threshold as defined in this policy.

“Municipality” : means the “Council” as defined above.

“Occupants” : means the owner and/or legal tenant of property and all individuals who live together in a single residential property.

- “Pensioner”** : means a person whom -
- (i) is at least 60 years of age on date of application, provided that where couples are married in community of property and the property is registered in both their names , the age of the eldest will be the qualifying factor;
 - (ii) is the registered owner of the property or registered as “Life right use” tenant in deeds office;
 - (iii) is the owner/occupant and account holder of the property concerned, which will consist of one dwelling only and no part thereof will be sub-leased;
 - (iv) must reside permanently on the property concerned which consists of one dwelling only; and
 - (v) a person who is a mentally and/or physically disabled person complying with the requirements in (i) to (iv) above.
- “Registration method”** : means registration process applied by Council in the indigent application process.
- “Resident”** : means a person residing within the area of jurisdiction of City of Ekurhuleni and consume services as provided by the Council.
- “Services”** : means the “basic services” as defined above.
- “Social service package”** : means higher levels of household services and access to public services such as roads, public transport, community services and emergency services as provided by Council.
- “Working Days”** : means Monday to Friday excluding public holidays.
- “Youth Headed household”** : Is deemed to be a household that is headed by a youth above the age of 18 years to 35 years, who has assumed the role of care-giver in respect of the children in the household and is responsible for management of such households, due to the parent/s guardian or care-giver of the household who was the registered owner/ account holder/ legal tenant of the property who is terminally ill, deceased or abandoned the children in that household.

7. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK AND GUIDELINES

- ▶ Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act No 108 of 1996.

Addition:

- ▶ Local Government Municipal Systems Act, Act No 32 of 2000.

Guidelines

- (a) National Framework for Municipal Indigent Policies: Towards a basket of services for the poor dated May 2007.

- (b) Free Basic Strategy and guidelines prepared by the Department of Water and Sanitation
- (c) Electricity Basic Service Support Tariff (Free Basic Electricity Policy) prepared by the Department of Minerals and Energy 2003.

Policies and Bylaws

- (a) Provision of Free Basic Water Supply Policy
- (b) Provision of Free Basic Electricity Policy
- (c) Credit Control And Debt Collection Policy
- (d) City of Ekurhuleni Tariff schedule (Annexure C);
- (e) Relevant municipal bylaws and policies

8. SCOPE OF POLICY APPLICATION

The Indigent Support Policy shall be applicable within the area of jurisdiction of the City of Ekurhuleni.

The Indigent Support Programme must be accessible to all qualifying indigent persons.

9. CRITERIA FOR QUALIFICATION FOR INDIGENT SUPPORT

9.1 REGISTERED HOUSEHOLD

9.1.1 INDIGENT HOUSEHOLD

Indigent relief will be granted to an approved household where the –

- (a) combined household income of all occupants / residents tenant, his/her spouse or life partner, and/or dependents residing on the property and are over the age of 18 years of age, is less than two (2) monthly minimum wage determination based on Area “A” Domestic worker who work more than 27 ordinary hour per week, as amended by Minister of Labour from time to time;
- (b) account in respect of Basic Services and/or Assessment rates is held with Council in the name of the applicant;
- (c) Applicant is a South African citizen or in possession of permanent residence with South African Identity;
- (d) The property is used for residential purposes only; and
- (e) Municipal value of property does not exceed maximum value as determined by Council’s assessment rates tariff policy.
- (f) The current account of a deceased estate may be subsidised if the surviving spouse or dependants who occupy the property applies for assistance. Relevant supporting documents must be submitted as part of the application.

9.1.2 CHILD-HEADED HOUSEHOLD/ YOUTH HEADED HOUSEHOLDS

Child-headed and or Youth headed households will be treated as special cases subject to the following conditions:

- (a) the normal qualifying criteria for indigent support in respect of remaining members of household is complied with;

- (b) The deceased parent's account will be closed subsequent to change of ownership
- (c) the oldest child signs the user agreement assisted by appointed legal guardian in possession of "Letter of authority" issued by local magistrate court. Letter of authority will only be accepted during period of winding up of estate, not to exceed period of 24 months from date of issue unless proof of address can be submitted.
- (d) property is not occupied by any member other than minor dependent children of deceased owner and or tenant;
- (e) the status of the household is reviewed in terms of this policy at least on 36 monthly bases

9.1.3 EXCLUSIONS – REGISTERED HOUSEHOLDS

Indigent relief will NOT be granted where the applicant, household, occupants/ residents and/or dependants residing on the property, as the case may be, -

- (a) receive significant benefits or regular monetary income that is above the indigent qualification threshold;
- (b) where the applicant is not the registered consumer of services in the records of Council;
- (c) where the applicant own/s more than one (1) property, registered individually or jointly within area of jurisdiction of Council;
- (d) where the applicant rent/s or subleases his property or part thereof to any third party and the monetary income is above the indigent qualification threshold during the duration of the grant period; or
- (e) applicant tampers or illegally connects or reconnects services prior to this application, until such time as the total costs, penalties, other fees, illegal consumption and any applicable tariffs and rates due to the Council have been paid in full.
- (f) business activities are being conducted on property and the income is above the indigent qualification threshold.
- (f) should the applicant refuse entry to the property or household's premises for verification purposes, the Indigent application should be reversed or cancelled.

9.2 DEEMED INDIGENT HOUSEHOLD

Households within the following categories of properties will be deemed to be indigent households, if -:

- a) the property is used for residential purposes only as reflected in General Valuation roll; and
- b) the residential exclusion as per Property Rates Act 2004 (Act No 6 of 2004) is applicable to property; and
- c) the municipal value of property does not exceed maximum value R250 000.

Households within City of Ekurhuleni listed as/under Un-proclaimed Townships will be deemed to be indigent households, if:

- d) Property identified as Un-proclaimed Township is not registered at the Deeds Office.
- e) Proclaimed property is registered in the name of City of Ekurhuleni and included in general valuation roll; and

- f) Provisional value of individual developed residential property, as determined by City of Ekurhuleni municipal valuer, will not exceed maximum value of R 250 000 on date of valuation.
- g) Account in respect of Basic Services is held with Council in the name of the household;

9.2.1 EXCLUSIONS – DEEMED INDIGENT HOUSEHOLDS

Indigent relief will be withdrawn where upon verification the deemed indigent household, including occupants/residents and/or dependants residing on the property, as the case may be, -

- (a) receive significant benefits or regular monetary income that is above the indigent qualification threshold;
- (b) owner of property owns more than one (1) property, registered individually or jointly.
- (c) owner of property rent or sublease his property or part thereof to any third party.
- (d) deemed indigent household tampers or illegally connects or reconnects services.
- (e) business activities are being conducted on property.
- (f) properties registered in name of National, Provincial or Local Government
- (g) owner of property applies to be excluded from deemed indigent relief.

9.2.2 (DEEMED INDIGENT)

Indigent relief in respect of other services provided by Council, *excluding household free basic services and assessment rates grants*, will be granted to approved **indigent person** where:-

- (a) applicant is a South African citizen or in possession of permanent residence certificate;
- (b) applicant is over the age of 18 years of age but includes financially dependent minors of applicant;
- (c) household income is less than two (2) monthly minimum wage determination based on Area “A” Domestic worker who work more than 27 ordinary hours per week, as amended by Minister of Labour from time to time;

10. EXTENT OF INDIGENT SUPPORT

10.1 REGISTERED INDIGENT HOUSEHOLD / PERSON

- (a) Indigent support will be given on a monthly basis, and the extent of the monthly support will be determined by the national policy guidelines and the Council’s budgetary provisions in respect of:
 - (i) free basic water;
 - (ii) free refuse collection;
 - (iii) free basic electricity or energy (depending on which service level is applicable);
 - (iv) free basic sanitation; and
 - (v) assessment rates in respect of residential property registered in name of qualifying indigent owner subject to the maximum amount as determined by Council from time to time.
- (b) the level of indigent support granted shall not exceed the actual monthly billing to the account in respect of the services referred to in the preceding paragraph.

- (c) the relief will be subject to national policy guidelines and the Council's budgetary provisions.
- (d) the recipient's monthly account will be credited with the amount of indigent relief granted in terms of this policy.
- (e) a household may apply for the continuation of relief on expiry of relief period as specified in Section 11 below - subject to compliance with policy qualification criteria.
- (f) the Council may determine special tariffs and/ or grant rebates in respect of the following social services subject to the availability of funds and compliance with qualifying criteria in terms of this policy:
 - (i.) Sports grounds, pools;
 - (ii.) Fire Protection
 - (iii.) Transport
 - (iv.) Market;
 - (v.) Museums;
 - (vi.) Mayor's Relief Fund;
 - (vii.) Hiring of halls;
 - (viii.) Cemeteries and crematoria;
 - (ix.) Damage to property as a result of natural disaster ;

Damaged property as a result of natural disaster) ;(Human Settlement to be involved)

- (x.) Any other services as determined by Council; and
- (xi.) Emergency and ambulance services.
- (xii.) Grass and tree cutting within property in respect of registered disabled and frail pensioners.
- (xiii.) Rodent and pest control within property in respect of registered disabled and Frail pensioners
- (xiv.) Indigent Burial

10.2 DEEMED INDIGENT HOUSEHOLD)

- (a) Indigent support will be given on a monthly basis, and the extent of the monthly support will be determined by the national policy guidelines and the Council's budgetary provisions in respect of:
 - (i) free basic water;
 - (ii) free refuse collection;
 - (iii) free basic electricity or energy (depending on which service level is applicable);
 - (iv) free basic sanitation; and
 - (v) assessment rates.
- (b) the level of indigent support granted shall not exceed the actual monthly billing to the account in respect of the services referred to in the preceding paragraph.
- (c) the relief will be subject to national policy guidelines and the Council's budgetary provisions.
- (d) the recipient's monthly account will be credited with the amount of indigent relief granted in terms of this policy.
- (e) in terms of resolution 4 of the Item A-F (24-2006) (Writing off of Outstanding debts in respect of Indigent Accounts) dated 29 June 2006, the accumulated debt in respect of **deemed indigents** be written off administratively on monthly basis as from date of qualification in terms of this policy.

11. PERIOD OF RELIEF

Application based Indigent relief is granted for a reviewable period of 36 months which is determined by Council from time to time.

Deemed indigent household relief is granted based on value of property.

12. ADMINISTRATION OF INDIGENT SUPPORT

The applying citizen must present his/her Identity Document at the point of application for which the following steps will occur:-

- (a) if registered owner, property details to be supplied with copy of monthly account statement and / or prepaid meter token along with SAPS certificate affidavit of names and identity number of individual residing on property.
- (b) after the application form has been completed, an effective and efficient evaluation system must be used in order to verify the information furnished by the applicant and to reach a decision within 90 days after the date on which the application was lodged.
- (c) if a household is found to be indigent, his/her personal particulars must be registered on a database linked to the debtors system with immediate effect.
- (d) the onus is on the recipient of relief in terms of this policy to inform the Council of any change in his/her status or personal household circumstances.
- (e) the declaration of residence in a household will be captured as an appended record to the relevant Identity Document number, and that will be the only property for which the individual bearing that Identity Document number can claim subsidy. In the case of there being any dispute as to the residence of a given individual, that individual's declaration IN PERSON at his or her indigent/finance office will take precedence over any declaration made by another individual that the person in question resides in their household.
- (f) all indigents should be re-evaluated after 36 months from the date on which relief was authorized in order to assess the need for the continuation of relief in terms of this policy. The Health and Social Development Department must complete the re-verification prior to the expiry of the 36 months approved status period. In the event where the socio-economic status of the household is improved beyond the indigent threshold the applicant has a responsibility to apply for cancellation of the indigent status as prescribed.
- (g) Relief will be stopped with immediate effect if it is found that an approved indigent has supplied information known to have been untrue in order to obtain relief. It will further be stopped if it is discovered that an approved indigent failed to inform City of Ekurhuleni of changes in his/her/their financial circumstances which would disqualify them from receiving assistance in terms of this policy. Providing misleading information constitutes fraud and City of Ekurhuleni may claim any financial benefits that have been granted, from the indigent. In addition to having to repay the financial benefits, the indigent who has received the benefits will be guilty of committing an act of fraud which is a criminal offence and criminal charges may be brought against such person/s.

13. CONTROL MEASURES FOR THE DISTRIBUTION OF INDIGENT SUPPORT

- (a) any resident of the municipality who is aware of malpractice may lodge an objection for review by the Indigent Appeals Committee for granting such relief to such a person.

- (b) the details of all applicants and their respective households must be submitted to the Council on a quarterly basis.
- (c) Any person and or household registered as indigent may not sell and or change ownership of the property within period of 36 months from the date of approval of the indigent relief.

14. CORRECTIVE STEPS

If the extent of the indigent support as per Section 10 above is exceeded the following may be implemented:

- (a) Installation of a **Pre-paid Electrical Meter**.
- (b) Installation of a Flow restrictor
- (c) Surcharges Over and above the implementation of the Credit Policy will be applicable

15. ACTION AGAINST MALPRACTICES TO MISREPRESENTATION OR MISUSE

Customers found to have misrepresented themselves in order to benefit from any of the Councils relief and / or benefit in terms of this policy, will be deemed to have committed an offence and remedial measures will be taken in a manner as determined by the Council from time to time, and all relief and / or benefits that have been received will be reversed to account of customer from date of offence.

- (a) the Council may refer any misrepresentation to the committee, who must take such action as ordered by the Council, or any of the following steps deemed appropriate by the committee:
 - (i) request the resident to provide full proof of his/her banking account, receipt of income details as well as pension registration where applicable.
 - (ii) the details of the objector shall remain anonymous.
 - (iii) request a social worker's report on the household, and
 - (iv) institute criminal proceedings against the recipient.
- (b) if it is established that incorrect information was furnished in obtaining relief any of the following actions may be taken:-
 - (i) suspend or stop the relief immediately.
 - (ii) recover from the recipient the amount of relief furnished by debiting his/her account.
 - (iii) apply the credit control and debt collection procedures of the municipality.
 - (iv) institute criminal proceedings against the recipient.
- (c) In the event that property is sold within period as prescribed in section 13(c) above, all accumulated debt written off on date of application will be reversed to current account. Rebates granted during approved indigent period until date of transfer will remain.
- (d) Penalty fees as stipulated in the City of Ekurhuleni's approved tariffs schedules will be applicable to customers found to have tampered, or illegally connects or reconnects services.

16. EXITING THE PROGRAMME

Upon the expiry of the 36 months period as contained in above the debtor may apply to be de-registered. The application for de-registration will be administrated by the Health and Social

Development Department who will advise Finance accordingly where after the affected departments will be requested to restore the full services at the property.

All approved applicants will be captured in the indigent data base, from which all skills development and job creation programmes developed by the City of Ekurhuleni will draw their intake from. Any department developing a measure or programme designed to target the poor will use this database as the source of their programme participants. This is designed to systematically assure that households qualifying for indigence are subject to the full range of interventions delivered through (or in collaboration with) the City of Ekurhuleni, in accordance with the Growth and Development Strategy Pillars, one of which is poverty alleviation.

Members of the registered households should be prepare to participate in the poverty alleviation programmes with the exclusion of pensioners and child headed households.

17. RIGHT TO APPEAL

- (a) An applicant who is the registered household owner living within the municipal jurisdiction and therefore feels aggrieved by a decision taken in respect of his/her application may lodge an appeal in terms of section 62 of the Municipal Systems, Act 32 of 2000.
- (b) The City Manager shall appoint an Indigent Appeal Committee that will consider all appeals.
- (c) The City Manager will appoint the chairperson of the Indigent Appeal Committee to be a person vested in Law in the City's employ.
- (d) The Indigent Appeal Committee will have to review, preside and or hear all lodged appeals within 30 working days, unless substantive facts have been provided contrary to this stipulation.
- (e) The Appeal's committee shall consist of the following departments Health and Social Development, Finance and Corporate and Legal Services.
- (f) All Appeals shall be lodged in a form prescribed by the Health and Social Development department and state the nature and reasons for appeal.
- (g) Until reviewed by Indigent Appeals Committee, indigent application will remain pending and credit control actions will be suspended until appeal has been evaluated by Indigent Appeals committee

18. SHORT TITLE

This policy shall be called the Indigent Support Policy of the City of Ekurhuleni.

